

ISTOOK TO BATTLE GUN BAN

Washington, D.C. - Calling it an "assault on Americans' rights," Oklahoma Congressman Ernest Istook, (R-5th District), vowed today to vote against legislation banning law-abiding citizens from owning a variety of firearms.

A vote is expected Thursday on a bill to ban what President Clinton calls "assault weapons," a term Istook calls "deceptive."

The Congressman argues the bill broadly describes many guns popular with gun owners, hunters and enthusiasts, and focuses on the cosmetic appearance of the firearms, not on their performance.

"The bill targets guns for banning based on cosmetic appearances, not on performance. Fully automatic weapons are already restricted under federal law. The guns listed in the bill don't 'spray' bullets, nor do they make bigger holes or shoot faster than other firearms. Under this bill, external items such as pistol grips and magazine extensions make a gun illegal. Removing them makes it legal. Either way, it shoots the same.

"The people who want to ban these and many other guns are really taking shots at Americans' Constitutional Rights," Istook said. "They're using scare tactics to try and make people believe that these are weapons wielded by armies of criminals, slaughtering whole neighborhoods. That's a big lie. Furthermore, once Congress outlaws these guns, it would have the precedent to outlaw all other guns.

"The guns in this bill certainly are NOT criminals' 'weapons of choice,' as gun control advocates are so fond of claiming. FBI statistics show these weapons account for less than 1 percent of all U.S. homicides, while killers used their *hands and feet* FIVE times more often to commit murder!

Istook notes the comments of Oklahoma County District Attorney Bob Macy at a recent town hall meeting on crime. Macy called the gun ban, "a smoke screen," and asserted the ban doesn't have "anything to do with whether we're going to reduce crime or not."

"If gun control advocates really want to control crime, and stop kids from carrying guns to school, I would point out that these things are *already illegal*," Istook said. "We must focus on tougher ENFORCEMENT of those laws and strict punishments for crimes, rather than punishing law-abiding citizens!"